

Contra Costa Co. backs new CSU
Supervisors would expand existing Hayward State branch in Concord

By Tamara Grippi, STAFF WRITER - October 13, 2004 - Contra Costa Times

The dream of Contra Costa County's own California State University campus caught fire at the Board of Supervisors meeting Tuesday.

The board voted unanimously to support the concept, put forward by Supervisor Mark DeSaulnier of Concord.

While acknowledging that the goal likely will take years to achieve, DeSaulnier urged the community to move forward with discussions now.

"For me, one of the top things I want to accomplish is to make sure there is a Cal State Contra Costa in my lifetime," DeSaulnier said. "Personally, I'm not going to settle for anything less."

The supervisors agreed that discussions should start with the county's family and human services committee and the city/county relations committee.

DeSaulnier said the cities, the county and its businesses will need to join forces with the academic community in order to make the stand-alone university a reality.

Contra Costa already offers a satellite campus of California State University, Hayward, a facility that opened in Concord in 1992.

Peter Wilson, dean of the Contra Costa campus, was enthusiastic about the prospect of expanding Cal State's presence in Contra Costa. Wilson emphasized the need to focus on beefing up the educational programs offered at the branch campus as a first step.

"If the only thing we think is the development of a stand-alone Cal State University, that will take a number of years to happen, if it happens at all," Wilson said.

The university also is embarking on determining how to develop the 386 acres of the Concord satellite site. Currently 10 acres are in use.

Wilson pointed to the recent success of a public/private partnership in Palm Desert in raising \$28 million during a five-year period to fund the buildings that launched a branch campus.

A new stand-alone university would be reviewed by the Cal State University board of trustees as well as the California Postsecondary Education Commission, which would forward its recommendation to the state Legislature.

At Tuesday's meeting, the board also decided to ask Cal State Hayward to hold off on its proposal to change the university's name in order to give Contra Costa, Alameda County and Hayward the chance to offer comments.

Last week, the university proposed changing the name to Cal State University, East Bay, in an attempt to better reflect the region it represents.

DeSaulnier said he doesn't want the name change to detract from Contra Costa's efforts to launch its own CSU.

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